

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE FIRE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

November 2002

OFFICE OF THE FIRE ADMINISTRATOR

Commission Office

The following items were discussed at the November 14, 2002 meeting of the Fire and Rescue Commission:

- Chair Aoyagi reported that the Office of Management and Budget had released the Maximum Agency Request Ceiling (MARC) for the MCFRS FY04 Operating Budget submission which reflects a \$2.5 million reduction below a same services budget that will result in proposals to reduce programs or services.
- The Commission was briefed on the status of the delays being encountered in the implementation of the PS2000 communications system.
- The *PS2000 Communications Transition Plan* was adopted. This plan establishes interim procedures during the transition and first year of operations under the PS2000 communications system until appropriate policy documents are developed and implemented.
- Revisions to the *METRO Incident SOPs* policy were approved to include an SOP for handling incidents in METRO yards.
- The goals of the MCFRS intended to guide future programmatic and budgetary initiatives were reaffirmed following a recent MCFRS Strategic Planning Convocation.
- A resolution submitted by Commissioner Larson to obtain information regarding MCFRS staff assigned to the 12th floor was tabled to allow the Fire Administrator to attempt to resolve this matter.

Research and Planning

- We welcomed back Mr. Scott Gutschick to the position of Senior Planner. Scott returned to MCFRS after about a one-year absence, during which he gained valuable experience in Emergency Management while employed in Palm Beach County, Florida. Scott will be able to use that experience along with his formidable research and planning experience to enhance the work of the MCFRS Office of Research and Planning.
- DTC Resnick worked with representatives from Burtonsville VFD, representatives from DPW&T and members of the Water Supply Implementation Work Group on a coordinated response to firefighting water supply concerns along the U.S. Route 29 corridor. The Office of Research and Planning is engaged in on-going coordination with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to resolve water supply issue along limited access highways throughout the County. Similarly, DTC Resnick attended a public meeting on the Route 28/Route 97 project to examine any Fire/Rescue concerns. This was coordinated with the DFRS Operations Bureau, Kensington and Sandy Spring VFDs.
- DTC Resnick toured Delaware's and Maryland's Emergency Operations Centers with the contract architect for Montgomery County's new EOC. This tour highlighted both concerns and solutions with the impending construction.
- DTC Resnick and GIS Manager Ierley served on the interview panel with Ms. Bigenho for the Data Manager position.

- DTC Resnick met with D/C Jarboe and support staff from the Corporate Development Section and the Office of Life Safety to develop a program for the CY03 WMD/Decon Conference.
- The Office of Research and Planning staff continues work on progressing several CIP planning projects, particularly the renovation of Stations 2 and 30, and the construction of Germantown West, Germantown East, Clarksburg and Travilah Fire/Rescue Stations, and the possible relocation of Stations 3, 17 and 18. This has included preparing and/or making presentations to OMB and the County Executive.

Emergency Management

Power Outages – In early December the County responded first to a snowstorm, and then to an icestorm that knocked out over 29,000 customers, especially in the Up-County areas. Allegheny Power had 6600 customers that were without power, some for upwards of five days. OEM coordinated with Health and Human Service, the Crisis Center, Red Cross, Recreation, Up-County Regional Service Center, MCPS, Sheriff, and Fire and Rescue to provide services to families in need. HHS called every assisted living facility to ensure that they had power or working generators. A shelter was opened in the Up-County Germantown Community Center, staffed by Recreation, HHS, and Red Cross. But the shelter was not needed overnight. Hot meals were served by Red Cross. An issue raised during response was the lack of GIS or other neighborhood identification information readily available from Allegheny. Information about outage areas was not separated by counties and substation outages overlapped over counties.

Ice Storm Community Outreach - MCFRS units from Stations 14, 9, 29, 17 and 13 canvassed neighborhoods providing safety information and checking for working battery powered smoke detectors. Over 100 smoke detectors were provided to families in need. Flyers were drafted and distributed in the impacted areas by Red Cross and Volunteer Center volunteers. Press releases were drafted about the shelter and warming center availability. OEM contacted Economic Development Agriculture liaison when problems arose for farmers with wells and milking machines affected by the outages.

LEPC Workshop – Plans are underway for the Utilities/Dams/Transportation workshop for December 16th. Dam owners and operators have been invited to discuss increased security planning. Power companies will discuss plans for power outage responses (planned before the outages of early December). The workshop is being federally funded with Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning grant funds.

EPA Conference – Montgomery County is one of 5 jurisdictions hosting the EPA Hazardous Materials Conference in Baltimore Dec 8-12th. Host jurisdictions have to provide facilitators for break out sessions. In exchange the County received 5 working scholarships (registration for facilitation) and one scholarship for an LEPC member to attend. The County may also be eligible for distribution of grant monies from any surplus from the operating budget of the conference. Last year the host counties received over \$5000 each. Chief Moose was the final session speaker on “the impact of the media.” Mike Krumlauf co-chaired the Host Scholarship committee.

Citizen Corp Council – K. Henning was one of 45 individuals named to the National Citizen Corp Council. She is representing the International Association of Emergency Managers. She attended the White House charter briefing by Homeland Defense Governor Ridge, and FEMA’s Joseph Allbaugh. The National Council will establish guidelines for funding local councils. Local Councils will organize volunteer organizations activated for disaster and emergency response or preparedness efforts. Our Council is chaired by the Volunteer Center as the lead agency.

NPS Exercise – Briefings have been held for the hospitals, Health and Human Services, and the EMG on the recommendations of the evaluation contractor for the Sept. 25th WMD exercise. Communication issues were high on the list of needed improvements between command posts and the EOC.

Bioterrorism Planning – Public Health, Fire Rescue, Police, Sheriff, OEM, and other agencies have been meeting regularly as part of the Bioterrorism Task Force to respond to WMD events. The Task Force is drafting a procedure to accept the National Pharmaceutical Stockpile, develop 1st responder vaccination and prophylaxis plans. OEM has been working with Dept. of Agriculture and MEMA on issues related to animals.

FEMA Briefing – FEMA Region 3 in Philadelphia hosted the quarterly RISC (regional interagency) meeting. K. Henning briefed the federal agencies on the use of the Incident Command System, especially for the EOC, and working with local jurisdictions.

Dirty Bomb Planning – Office of Emergency Management continues planning for the Radiological Exercise planned for February 25, 2003 which may include a “dirty bomb” scenario. The National Navy Medical Center will be one of two sites for the exercise. The exercise will include mock victim volunteers to be decontaminated.

e-Team – The e-Team software has been purchased by both Maryland Emergency Management Agency and the Council of Governments to test as the vehicle for coordinating the RICC. E-Team and COG representatives provided an overview of how the system would work in the EOC to District Chief Resnick and the staff of Emergency Management.

EOP – The 2002 Emergency Operations Plan scheduled Annexes have been circulated to the EMG for review and updates. The Annexes are being forwarded to OMB and the County Attorney. County agencies reviewed the annexes in the context of post September 11th response and capabilities.

Terrorism Equipment Grant – MEMA Director Don Keldsen signed the MOU that will allow the County to purchase equipment for the \$129,899 grant. Police, Fire and Rescue, OEM, and other agencies have been meeting as part of an on-going assessment process required by the grant.

NOAA Radios – Hundreds of NOAA Weather radios purchased by State were distributed to private elementary schools by MCFRS over the past 8 weeks. The State list of facilities is missing a number of private schools recognized by the County. OEM is now looking for funding sources for the additional radios.

Training – Planning is underway for next quarter training. Jan 22-23rd OEM will conduct a two day WMD course on the Disaster Command System and activation of the EOC for bioterrorist events. February 13th will be the annual Communications in Disaster class. Preparations are also underway for the 4 day Mass Fatality class for Public Health WMD events.

Community Outreach – Nov 16th Bob Nemchin conducted a Family Emergency Preparedness class for Child, Youth and Family Service representatives (who regulate daycare centers).

Community Education Safety Section

- Attended various Staff meetings.
- Replied, by phone or email, to 75 citizen, 35 FD, & 20 “other” (media, county gov’t) inquiries (17 hours).
- Met with various department staff and members totaling 13 hours.

- Composed various Memos and Safety Tips for dissemination to all work locations. (3 Hours)
- Scheduled various community education events and classes (8 hours).
- Dealt with various personnel and program issues relating to community safety.
- Various correspondences composed and disseminated. (8 hours)
- Continued with various Fire Evacuation Planning sessions for various High/Mid Rise Office/Residential, churches, and other 1-story buildings **NOW IMPACTING over 131,500 people encompassing 156 HOURS.**
- Meetings re CERT/CHAMP program developmental (3 hours).
- Operation Extinguish management. (2 hour)
- CPSS Tech's participated in several Car Seat Checks.
- Home Fire Safety Evaluations conducted. (1 hours)
- Attended COG Pub. Ed. Group meeting (3 hours).
- Thank You letter to Energizer for donating 200 9-V batteries (1 Hour).
- Supervise Towson University Intern (10 hours)
- Fire & Injury Prevention Summit background work (4 hours).
- Attend FRC Community Outreach Meeting (2 hours).
- Attended NFA Course Community Education Leadership (2 weeks).

Corporate Development Services:

Fleet and Facilities Management Section:

- The vendor has reported that the replacement mid-mount aerial tower will be ready for mid-point inspection in December 2002, final inspection in February 2003 with delivery scheduled for March 2003.
- Several new fleet vehicles are in the process of being outfitted and assigned to Code Enforcement and Investigations.
- The Silver Spring FS #1 replacement continues in the detailed design phase. This facility will house the fire station, a police sub-station, the County's Silver Spring regional offices, and eventually a children's safety program.
- Takoma Park FS #2 continues in schematic design phase. The schematic design phase should be completed in January 2003 making the project ready to move forward to Park and Planning and Historic Preservation Commission for review.
- The West Germantown fire/rescue station land acquisition is in progress. This station will be in the vicinity of Rt. 117 & Rt. 118.
- This section continues to support a number of ancillary PS2000 fleet and facility programs.

DFRS Property Section:

- Processed 408 property related transactions during the month.
- Submitted requirements to the Office of Procurement for a new solicitation for firefighting helmets.
- Served as CDS representative to the MCFRS Budget Committee. Reviewed and commented as a committee on FY03 Savings Plan submissions and FY04 Budget enhancements
- Negotiated a plan to resolve a problem with a contractor.
- Served on structured interview panel for new Telecommunications Specialist position.
- Assisted USAR with requirement during and after Rockville parking garage collapse.

DIVISION OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

Bureau of Operations

River Rescue Strike Team

The River Rescue Strike Team responded to four incidents during the month of November. Several members of the team went out of country to assist another agency in setting up a dive team. Duties included team organization, equipment, and personnel training.

Bureau of Program Support Services

Communications

November 2002

Total Telephone Calls Received:	32425
Total 9-1-1 Calls Received:	9694
Total Admin Calls Received:	12701

- MFF Peter Hughes and FF Clinton Kraft attended and successfully completed the Medical Priority (EMD) Emergency Medical Dispatch Course on November 7-10, 2002. The course was hosted by the Morgan County 9-1-1 Center in Berkeley Springs, WV.
- FFs Troy Nolan, Bill Macuch and Sam Villani have completed their ECC training and are now considered minimum staffing.

Training

Exams completed for Emergency Vehicle Driver Testing in November are:

Written	12
Practical	10

Two sessions of "Case Review of Significant Incidents", part of the Command Officer Professional Development and Improvement program were held on November 9th and 10th, with twenty students attending each day.

Two career and one volunteer EMT-Paramedic were awarded charge status in November.

Recruit Class #22 continues with 34 recruits. Recruits are currently taking Essentials of Firefighting which they will complete in December. A graduation ceremony for Recruit Class #22 is scheduled for Friday, January 10, 2003 at 11:00am, in the Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center of Montgomery College, Rockville Campus.

EMT-Intermediate (EMT-I) class continues with 17 students. Students have completed the Anatomy and Physiology portion of the class and began the main portion of the course.

Bureau of Life Safety Services

Fire Code Enforcement

The four new inspectors completed a Life Safety class on December 11th.

A new Memorandum of Understanding with MCPS is being developed.

All public schools have had their primary inspections completed. Re-inspections are in progress and compliance is around 95%. We have started with private schools

The Fire Code enforcement conducted an amnesty night of inspections for assembly occupancies in Bethesda on November 22nd. We advised these facilities of items what we would be looking for but on this night we did not issue any civil citations.

Fire and Explosive Investigation

In November, Fire and Explosive Investigators investigated 15 accidental fires and 15 criminal fire related incidents. The Bomb Squad responded to a total of 17 explosive / suspicious package / letter, threat incidents. The total estimated dollar loss for accidental fires was \$ 732,000 and \$ 29,620 for criminal fire related incidents.

Lt. Shaw and his K-9 partner Hank were requested to assist with investigations in Prince Georges County and in Washington D.C.

The Fire and Explosive Investigation department participated in the Silver Spring holiday parade.

There were several county residents burned this month either by attempting to fight a fire or caught themselves on fire due to carelessness. None of the burn injuries were life-threatening.

DIVISION OF VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

- Began with the first of a series of budget meetings
- Participated in a unit citation at Sta. 15
- Attended a meeting with a Brigade Commander from the Scottish Fire Service
- Attended a meeting with the Fire Administrator, Chief Strock, R. Riffe, Asst Chief Clemens and F. Welsh regarding the high school fire science Program
- Another budget meeting – with Sta. 29 and 6
- Met with Chief Strock, Dep. Chief Master and Capt. Jacobs regarding Metro guidelines
- Another budget meeting – with Sta. 8 and 15
- Attended a Bio-Chem First Responder meeting
- Met with F. Welsh, Dep. Chief Allwang, Chief Seavey regarding the EMBRS problem
- Met with the Safety Committee
- Prepared a briefing for new Council members
- Meta at the PSTA with the area Federal Fire Chiefs
- Met with the COG Fire Chiefs at the IAFC Hdqts. Building

- Met with R. Wills, F. Welsh, R. Riffe and L. Dowdy regarding the student live-in program
- Met with Chief Strock, Ass't Chiefs Bowers and Carr regarding the driver training recertification program
- Attended the Kendal retirement
- Met with the Fire Administrator and the new President of the DVFD, Tom Gardiner
- Attended the Fire Board, Chiefs Advisory and Operations Committee Meetings and the Fire and Rescue Commission and Fire and Rescue Association meetings
- Mediated personal, personnel and/or sensitive issues with various LFRDs, etc.